

LESSON 13

FAILURE IN TAIF

Tenth and Eleventh Year of Prophethood

Opposition continued in Makkah, so Rasulullah(S) decided to go and preach in another city, Ta'if. Ta'if was the center of the tribes of Thaqif and Hawazin. It housed the temple of their god, al-Lat. It is located on an elevated plain, and rich Makkans used it as a summer resort.

Rasulullah (S) went there with Zaid (R), his adopted son and freed slave. The people of Taif proved to be worse than the Makkan *Kuffar*. They were a rich and proud people, who firmly believed in their gods.

When Rasulullah (S) met the leaders of Thaqif and invited them to Islam, they ridiculed him and pelted him with stones. He was bodily injured. He was bleeding all over. Zaid (R) was also hit on his head and was bleeding. Young boys made fun of Rasulullah (S) and chased him out of town. But he did not curse them or lose heart. / *اياه و زيدا و ابا لهب و ابا جهل و ابا سفيان و ابا لهب و ابا جهل و ابا سفيان*

Rasulullah (S) had been informed by Allah earlier that rich and proud people have always rejected their prophets. The Quran says,

We have not sent to any town a warner
but its proud inhabitants declare, "We shall
not believe in the revelation which you bring."

And they say, 'We have plenty of wealth and lots of
children. We shall not be punished.

Saba 34:34-35

Rasulullah's mission was to invite mankind to the right path and save them from Hell. In this task he knew that only Allah would help him.

Outside of Taif he sat to rest in a garden near a vineyard. He reflected on the happenings of the day, then looked up to heaven. He raised his hands and prayed,

O, Allah, to You alone I make complaint
of my helplessness, lack of resources
and insignificance before other men.

You are most Merciful. The Lord
of the helpless and You are my Lord.

In whose hands would You abandon me —
of an unsympathetic enemy and an unkind
foe? But if You are not angry with me
I don't worry about anything else.

I seek protection in the Light of Your
face. You alone control all affairs
of this world as well as of the
hereafter. And there is no power
except Your power.

These noble sentiments of Rasulullah(S) must have moved the Heaven. Allah knew very well the suffering of His prophet, and He alone knew the great rewards of the future.

Allah sent an angel to Rasulullah(S) who told Rasulullah(S), "If you wish, Allah will unite the two mountains on both sides of Taif and crush the people between them."

Rasulullah (S), who was sent as a mercy for all mankind, replied to the angel, "No! I don't want any punishment for them. I hope Allah will guide them and their children to the straight path of Islam."

Allah, in fact, heard the prayers of Rasulullah(S) and fulfilled his desire; ten years later the tribes of Hawazin and Thaqif accepted Islam.

As Rasulullah (S) and Zaid (R) sat by the vineyards, its owner saw them. He was moved to see their condition. As a gesture of Arab hospitality, he sent them a gift of grapes through his slave, Addas. Rasulullah (S) accepted the gift, saying, "*Bismi Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim*. (in the name of Allah the Mercy-giving, the Merciful.)"

This form of acceptance surprised Addas. He said, "These words are not generally spoken by people here." Rasulullah(S) asked him where he came

from. Addas replied, "I am a Christian from Nineveh." Rasulallah (S) was pleased to hear this. He said, "Oh you are from the city of my brother Yunus (A), the prophet of Allah."

A conversation with Rasulallah (S) convinced Addas of the truth of Rasulallah's mission. He kissed Rasulallah's hands and became a Muslim. He helped the injured Prophet (S) take a good rest.

When the masters of Addas learned about this they became furious. They warned him about the serious consequences of this act. But Addas had seen the truth. He bravely replied, "No one living on earth today is better than this Prophet. He has told me a truth which only a prophet could tell."

The news of the unsuccessful mission of Rasulallah (S) delighted the Makkans. It emboldened them to persecute Rasulallah(S) and his companions even more. But Allah had decided to greatly honor His Prophet and through him to honor his *ummah*.

Points of review:

1. Rasulallah (S) with Zaid (R) went to Taif to preach Islam.
2. The people of Taif rejected the Prophet's call, insulted him and injured him.
3. Rasulallah (S) turned to Allah and prayed for His mercy and help.

Words to remember:

Consequences, embolden, foe, insignificance.

Important names

Addas (R), al-Lat, Hawazin, Taif, Tha'if.

Quranic Study

The name of Prophet Yunus is mentioned in several verses of the Quran (*al-Nisa'* 4:163; *al-An'am* 6: 86; *Yunus* 10:98).

Surah al-Saffat 37:139-147 briefly narrates his story. Read it with the help of a *Tafsir*.